



SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS

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SINCE 1858

For Parents, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends of St. Augustine School in Washington D.C.

Our St. Augustine School journey

Mrs. Deniqua Freddie

When we moved to the DMV area, we really weren't sure where we would live or where our son would attend school. While visiting, we attended Mass at Saint Augustine and instantly were moved to become parishioners.

Shortly after, our living arrangement was established in Manassas, then we learned about the St. Augustine School. We visited several schooling options and engaged in school tours while going through our selection process. St. Augustine among many were among our most favored in consideration of the faith-based education. After prayerful consideration, we let our son make the final decision. He chose Saint Augustine because of the strong Catholic values and the welcoming environment he immediately sensed.

When we enrolled our son at Saint Augustine for the 2024-2025 school year, we were expecting a school that would challenge him academically while nurturing his Catholic faith. We hoped for a



community where teachers would see education as a ministry, not just a job. From the very beginning, Saint Augustine has gone beyond those expectations, providing a rich and balanced experience that has helped him grow both intellectually and spiritually.

The fact that Saint Augustine is a Catholic school absolutely played a major role in our decision. As a family, our faith is at the center of everything we do, and it was critical for us that our son be able to continue growing his relationship with Christ while receiving an excellent education.

Our experience as parents at Saint Augustine has been such a blessing.

We immediately felt welcomed and supported, not just academically but spiritually as well. We've developed relationships with other parents and teachers. It's a testament of true community in raising and educating our son.

One of the things that truly surprised us about Saint Augustine School was how quickly we became part of the community. From day one, we felt like we were among family. The genuine care, the faith-centered environment, and the strong sense of belonging were far more than we ever could have expected. It's clear that God has placed us where he wanted us to be.

Since starting at Saint Augustine, we have seen tremendous growth in our son, especially in subjects that had previously come easily to him. The curriculum has challenged him to think deeper, work harder, and become a more well-rounded student. Beyond academics, we've also seen incredible growth in his faith and confidence which will pay great dividends in the flourishing of life.

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From the Principal's Desk

Dear Alumni, Parishioners, and Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you in excellent spirits. As we get ready to wrap up another academic year, it is remarkable to reflect on the journey we've undertaken together. The arrival of spring not only brings a season of renewal but also serves as a perfect opportunity for us to celebrate the vibrant activities occurring within our school community.

We take pride in being a flourishing institution that has faithfully served families in our district for an impressive 167 years. Our dedicated staff, combined with the enthusiasm of our students, embodies a daily commitment to learning, growth, and faith. Collectively, we acknowledge our achievements while honoring the numerous accomplishments of our community members.

The recently concluded third quarter was filled with engaging events that fostered unity among us. Our celebration of Catholic Schools Week, the 100th Day of School, and Black History Month provided invaluable opportunities for learning and connection. These events not only enriched our curriculum but also strengthened the bonds within our community.

Additionally, our students completed the second session of the NWEA MAP growth assessment, and I am excited to report that they demonstrated significant progress in both reading and mathematics. Their hard work and dedication have truly been commendable, reflecting their commitment to academic excellence. We also had



the privilege of acknowledging our honor roll students during the Principal's breakfast, a celebration of their outstanding achievements.

We were working in April toward our annual Science Fair. This event is always a highlight, showcasing our students' curiosity and creativity as they explore the wonders of science. It's a fantastic opportunity

for them to engage with their peers and share their discoveries.

As we prepare for the next chapter, we are also proud to announce that our 8th graders will transition to some of the very best Catholic, private, and public high schools in our area. We have every confidence in the abilities of our 8th graders and know they will continue to excel in their future endeavors.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support and partnership. We are truly fortunate to have such a dedicated and caring school community. Your involvement makes a world of difference!

Wishing you a joyful and reflective Spring, I filled with hope and blessings.

Educationally yours,

Dr. Anika Logan



Black History Month February 2025

Career Day speakers showcase various opportunities for students



Ms. T. Ebewei



Mr. Farhad Shirzad



Lt. Cmdr. Deniqua Freddie



Mr. Jeff Frederick



Mr. Rohulamin Quander

On Thursday, March 20, twelve speakers visited Saint Augustine Catholic School for the annual Career Day event.

The three-hour morning event featured an alumnus, four school parents, two friends of the school, and eight speakers who are also parishioners.

Mr. Jeff Frederick, a grandfather of a Saint Augustine student, in addition to the father of twin eighth graders, spoke with the students about his work as a property manager. Much of what he has learned as a property manager, he told the middle school students during his session with them, he learned on the job. The most challenging part of working in property management is having to evict residents for non-payment of rent, although he did not use the word “evict.”

Mrs. Treseat Frederick, Jeff

Frederick’s wife, spoke with the students about being an investigator at the Metropolitan Police Department. She made it clear that her job is not to establish the innocence or guilt of a particular party but to collect evidence that prosecutors and detectives can evaluate.

Ms. Raven Hill, a communications executive with the Maryland State Department of Education, is a native of Chicago and parishioner who spoke with the Saint Augustine students about starting her career in a 10-year stint when she was a newspaper and radio reporter in New Jersey and Texas, before she settled into the Washington, D.C., area, initially drawn by the political world.

Ms. T. Ebewei, a parishioner, spoke with the students about how her career has included teaching Math at St. Mary’s of Piscataway School in

Clinton, Md., where she also served as principal. She told students about how she played professional basketball in Europe and is currently the athletic director at Suitland High School in Suitland, Md.

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Deniqua Freddie, a native of Louisiana, school parent, and civil engineer, also spoke to the middle school students. As a disciple, she said that she considers Jesus to be an engineer. After all, he learned how to build things through his apprenticeship and work with his foster father, St. Joseph. A St. Augustine parishioner who was wearing camouflage, she said that she was on deployment with the Navy when her son turned one year, showing the sacrifices that service members have to make.

Dr. Susy Thomas, a psychologist, tried to chip away at the stigma

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Ms. Raven Hill



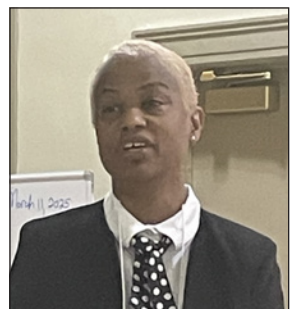
Mr. David Roling



Dr. Susy Thomas



Ms. Velma Hart



Mrs. Treseat Frederick

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surrounding mental health that many Americans have. She told her middle school audience during one session that when psychologists and school counselors talk with students in session, they try to talk not just about what might be troubling a young person but also what strengths they have.

Mr. Farhad Shirzad, a friend of Saint Augustine, quizzed the students about how many of them read books. As a Bethesda-based publisher of books about Iran, one could say he has some skin in the game of producing a generation of readers, but he conceded to the middle schools that there are many competitors for our attention, from social media and our electronic devices to television and video. He also informed students about how Iranians celebrate their New Year, which began on March 20, with the dawn of spring.

Ms. Audra Degesys Lykos, a parent, spoke about her career working in international development. Holding up a passport, she let her audience know that those who work for the U.S. government outside the country hold personal and business passports. They tend to serve in places where there are needs for basic services, such as clean water and transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Richard J. Cooper Jr., '54, a parishioner, told students about opportunities to learn how to fly with the Air Force Civil Air Patrol. "Coop" has received a few awards from the Civil Air Patrol over the years for his longtime work in youth development, which has included mentoring and promoting STEM academies.

Ms. Cecelia Grillo, a parishioner who works in IT project management

at the Department of Homeland Security, spoke with the students about her work.

Meanwhile, **Mr. David Roling**, a parishioner, spoke about highway construction and the heavy civil construction industry. He made it clear that CEOs of such companies have to be very careful when bidding for work to make sure that it is profitable for their companies.

Mr. Rohulamin Quander, a DC native and parishioner, gave the students his background, having served as an attorney, administrative law judge and a DC tour guide. He has written four books about his family history.

A friend of the school, **Ms. Velma Hart** talked with the students about serving as a non-profit executive. She estimated that

there are 200,000 non-profits in the U.S., including some very large operations, including the Red Cross, where one can make a good living. She serves as executive director of the National Association of Women in Construction of Fort Worth, Texas, a position that she fulfills remotely from Upper Marlboro, Md. "I'm travelling much of the time," she commented. She stays in touch with her staff in Texas.

Speakers held three sessions, speaking on panels to groups of students from Kindergarten through 8th grade. Following a brief ceremony when speakers received certificates from the school, many of the speakers joined the students in reciting the Angelus at 12 noon.



School Mass on February 21. Venerable Mother Mary Lange founded the Oblate Sisters of Providence of Baltimore, who served at Saint Augustine Catholic School for more than 90 years.

Major Donor Dinner highlights

Rev. Patrick A. Smith introduced Saint Augustine's first-year principal, Dr. Anika Logan, to a group of 15 school donors gathered at St. Augustine's Rectory on Saturday, March 22.

In addition to brief talks from Fr. Pat and Dr. Logan, the annual Major Donor Dinner included presentations from Lawrence H. Parks, II, the School Governance Board chair and Parish Finance Council chair, and Bill Murray, the school's development director.

Fr. Smith talked about how the Catholic Church is celebrating a Jubilee Year, and that historically, such years have been marked by forgiven debts, benevolence, and acts of mercy.

He recalled the 2007-2008, which was a Jubilee Year (150th anniversary) of Saint Augustine Catholic School, when the Archdiocese of Washington announced in September 2017 that eight DC Catholic schools would close, including St. Augustine. Within a matter of months, however, parishioners and friends of the school raised \$300,000 and produced a 5-year Strategic Plan to keep the school open, in addition to pledges from alumni and parishioners to give \$650,000 over five years. The school also received a \$100,000 bequest from the late George Dines, a longtime parishioner.

"As God so beautifully came through for us, we will never outgive God," Fr. Smith said.

"God has not changed," Fr. Smith said, recalling that St. Augustine was disrupted by the Spanish Flu outbreak in 1918, in addition to the

2019-2021 COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Logan told the gathered group that she was improving and increasing communication with school parents, in addition to the school's staff. She is working on ongoing evaluation of teachers and noted that she has a veteran faculty and that she did not have to hire any new teachers when she assumed her position at St. Augustine in July 2024. She is also working on providing more resources for teachers.

A native of Jamaica, she was a third-grade teacher for 10 years before becoming a Catholic school principal. She has served as a school leader in the Archdiocese of Newark and the Archdiocese of Baltimore, in addition to her current post.

Five out of seven school classes tested through the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing in Math were rated High Growth/Achievement, while seven out of nine grades tested in English

were High Growth/Achievement in English, according to Dr. Logan. Students take computer-based MAP tests three times a year, and it's designed to measure their progress over the school year.

"It's been a very challenging year for the school building," including a leaking roof and other capital expenditures, noted Parks in his talk. Regardless of any unexpected expenses, he noted that Fr. Smith is not willing to compromise on providing a high quality education for the students at the PK3 through 8 grade school.

Murray noted that donors, including individuals and foundations, had given \$360,000 to support Saint Augustine School since July 1, 2024, an increase from the 2024 school year. The goal for the 2025 school year is \$500,000.

The dinner for the event came from Busboys & Poets Restaurant on 14th Street.



Congratulations to our Second Quarter honors students! We held a breakfast for them to celebrate their success.

Obituary

One of our school's longest serving employees, teacher assistant, Mrs. Delores Grymes, passed away peacefully on Saturday, April 12, 2025.

For over 25 years, Mrs. Grymes served the St. Augustine Catholic School community with unwavering dedication and a warm heart. She was a cherished member of our staff who touched the lives of countless students, teachers, and parents. Her kindness, patience, and genuine care created a positive and supportive learning environment for all.

Mrs. Grymes was truly loved by everyone in our school community. Students will remember her gentle encouragement, helpful assistance in the classroom, and friendly smile in the hallway. Teachers valued her dedication to the students, and willingness to help. Our parents appreciated her commitment to their children's well-being and warm and approachable demeanor.

Our school has had counselors



Delores Patricia Grymes
(July 4, 1943 – April 12, 2025)

and support staff available for students who have needed to talk during this period of grief.

Mrs. Grymes was preceded in death by her husband, Augustus Ellsworth Grymes. The couple had three children: Lisa, Joshua (Antoinette), and Christine, in addition to six grandchildren, thirteen great grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren. Mrs. Grymes is also survived by her brother, Arthur Linder, Sr., and sister, Maria Wilson, and their families.

She was a graduate of Theodore

Roosevelt High School in the District. She had begun working for The Hot Shoppes as a hostess in Washington, D.C., before transitioning to C&P Telephone Company, working initially as a telephone operator in 1964. She retired from working at C&P in 1993.

She then began volunteering at St. Augustine School, eventually becoming a teacher's aide and also working in before and aftercare, as well as at the school's summer camp. In August 2024, as her health began to decline, she concluded her work at our parish school.

"Patty" was a member of Christ Memorial Baptist Church since 1974, helping as a church clerk, deaconess, and a member of the chorus, as well as doing outreach with the homeless.

After an April 24 funeral at Corinthian Baptist Church in Lanham, Md., Mrs. Grymes was laid to rest at Fort Lincoln Cemetery.

Dr. Anika Logan contributed to this obituary.

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Our St. Augustine School journey

Our son's teachers at Saint Augustine have been an incredible blessing. They are deeply committed, faith-driven, and truly care about each child as a whole person. They challenge, nurture, and inspire their students every day, and we are so thankful for the role they have played in helping our son become not just a better student, but a better young man.

For parents who are seeking a school for their children, my advice would be to pray and listen to where God is leading you. Look for a school that will nurture not only the mind but also the soul. Saint Augustine has provided our son with a strong academic foundation rooted in Catholic values, and it truly feels like an extension of our home and our faith life.

We have been able to be active parents at Saint Augustine. My husband is involved with the athletic program, and we both

feel supported in every way. The school has always respected and encouraged our role as our son's primary educators, working with us to reinforce the values we teach at home. It truly feels like a partnership rooted in faith and love.

A native of Lafayette, La., Mrs. Freddie and her husband are the parents of a fifth-grade student at St. Augustine. She is a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy. Her husband was a CYO basketball coach at St. Augustine this past season.

Middle school changed the trajectory of young alumna's life

Although *Fanta Kabia '10* attended Saint Augustine Catholic School for just two years, they were very pivotal years in her development.

"It changed the trajectory of my life," she said.

Fanta is a senior consultant at Ernst & Young, where she works with federal, state and local clients, including the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Maryland Department of Information Technology, and the Florida Turnpike Agency. She's worked there for four years and previously worked for Oracle Corp on a Veterans Affairs contract and for the National Guard Bureau.

"Consulting is a very good career, if you're willing to build your network," she said.

She and her late brother Shek came to St. Augustine after their previous school, St. Gabriel's Catholic School, was closed in 2008.

"I had a lot of talents that didn't come out," previously to St. Augustine, she said. "It set me up for success," she said of the school. She attended St. Augustine through the federally-funded Opportunity Scholarship Program, which benefits low income DC families.

She credits Ms. Helene Cropper, vice principal and middle school English Language Arts teacher, with helping her and understanding her talents, including as a writer.

"She really inspired me," Fanta said. "With her way of teaching, I was able to shine."

She also credits St. Augustine with being a "community at the end of



the day." As a result, "I felt I had support" as she better applied herself and engaged in personal development. As she succeeded, her self-confidence grew.

"She wanted to give us the best education," Fanta said of the St. Augustine principal when she attended, Sister Gloria Agumagu, HHCJ.

Outside of the classroom, she played girls CYO basketball, performed in the Christmas play, and was a member of the praise dance team.

After matriculating from Archbishop Carroll High School, Fanta earned a bachelor's degree from George Washington University in International Relations and Global Public Health. She went on to compete in the 2018 Miss Grand International beauty pageant in Myanmar as a representative of Sierra Leone, where her mother was born.

Support Our School

Our fiscal year ends on June 30, and your donation can help us to meet our goal of raising \$500,000 to support our students for School Year 2025.

You can use this QR code, if you would prefer to give online, or you can write a check and deposit it in the enclosed reply envelope.

One can also give through the donation of stock or naming Saint Augustine Catholic School



as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance policy, or some other means. Please contact Bill Murray, the school's development director, to discuss at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org or 240-418-5427.

All donations are tax deductible, according to IRS regulations. Thank you for considering supporting our school and thank you to all of our donors.

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Congratulations to our top Readers



From the Readathon Fundraiser

Our Readathon concluded on Feb. 21. Congratulations to all students who participated!

In Memoriam



Leonard Nickens '87

May the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

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Story ideas for the newsletter? Please contact **Bill Murray** at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org.

Would you like to update your address for our records?
Please complete an alumni contact form at www.staug-dc.org/alumni.html.

We welcome inquiries from alumni, former students and anyone interested in our school.